

***Bodies to Creators: A Choreographic Conversation Regarding the Historical and Present  
Experiences of Female Career Dancers in the Western World***

**An Honors Thesis (THEA 434)**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

“Dance is for girls.” This is a stereotype I have heard my entire life, and it is typically used by men to express condescension stemming from ignorance. While it is true that women make up the majority of dancers in the field, this is no indication that dance is for the weak. Modern dance is the only artform dominated by women; this research-based project looks at the intersection between feminism and dance specifically, professional dance in the western world. Beginning with ballet in the 1800s, right around the time of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, ballet was controlled by the government, which in turn was controlled by men, who used ballet to influence public perceptions. The dancers during this time acted merely as pawns. Overtime, just as women began liberating themselves from men in society, women began to liberate themselves from men in dance. New styles emerged, and eventually women and dance became a common association. This work brings together the experiences of dancers’ past and present to react to this shift. Through the research and choreographic process, a timeline for this shift was established as women progressing from bodies, to dancers, and finally to creators. *Bodies to Creators* is a compilation of solo and group work that exhibits how female dancers have struggled, progressed, and in some ways stayed the same.

## **Acknowledgments**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor Jenn Meckley, who not only offered me guidance and support, but whose class inspired my curiosity to conceive this project in the first place. Without her, I would not have discovered my passion for dance history and this project would not have happened.

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I would also like to thank my dancers. Their openness and curiosity were integral to the final product of this work. I will always cherish the opportunity to work and grow with each and every one of them.

Next, I would like to thank Ella Donovan for always being there to remind me of my power and my worth. No one could ever ask for a better source of inspiration and friendship.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents who have always encouraged me to pursue my passion and have never missed a performance of all my years of dancing. They have offered me endless love and support to achieve whatever I set my mind to.

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## **Process Analysis**

### **Introduction**

This project confronts the reality of being a female dancer in the Western world today and throughout the course of history. My research has shown me the complexity of the evolution of the gender power struggle in dance, from the male domination of ballet to women taking the reins of modern dance and raising dance to its position as a high art form. Modern dance is the only art form pioneered and dominated by women; it is also closely linked to second and third wave feminism. My goal for this project was to share dancer's experiences as humans through the female lens. I accomplished this by looking at how the role of female dancers have evolved over time both on and off the stage. I also analyzed what themes female choreographers focused their work around and what these works might be a response to. Unintentionally, the focus of my choreography became on the experiences of my five dancers as well as their reactions to my research. Each of these five dancers brought something special and unique to the process due to their different upbringings and relationships with dance. Without them and their openness, the piece would have become something completely different. My original intention for this piece was for it to exist as its own production. I began however, to view the work more as a phase one of a larger, ongoing process that may very well extend into my post-graduate and professional career. I do not think this altered the significance of the work or my ability to convey my research and intention.

### **Conception**

My college dance history class was a turning point in my education and my experience as a dancer. I never had an interest in history, but once I found historical figures and events that I could relate to, I couldn't get enough. It was also at this point in my college career that I desperately needed something to be passionate about. I felt like I was going through the motions with dance and school, jumping through the hoops, but forming no real connections with any of my classes or the material I was learning. I had always struggled with deep insecurities created by trying to be what everyone else wanted me to be, and the shock of the college environment my freshman year further complicated my attempt to define my identity as well as my femininity. It paralyzed me and made me question everything I thought I knew about myself- as a woman and as a dancer. During those moments, and much of the year that followed, I was just a body for someone else to use. As dancers our bodies are our instrument. When we perform our instrument is on display, our bodies are on display. In class, our teachers judge and correct our bodies as we stare, nit-picking every perceived imperfection in the mirror. This environment tends to accentuate already present feelings of self-doubt and criticism. There is a phrase I have heard many dance teachers say about how to approach dance class, "leave everything else going on in your life at the door." What happens when a dancer can't do that?

I have experienced a lot of conflict over the course of my life as a dancer and woman. There have been several instances where I questioned why I continued to dance, but the thought of stopping was suffocating. So I pressed on, constantly trying to define myself. It was a question my dance history and advisor for this project posed to our class my junior year of college that sparked the conception of this project. Do you consider yourself a dancer or human first? For me the answer to this was immediate - human. I was surprised however, that several of my peers

answered differently. They preferred to think of themselves as dancers first in order to distinguish themselves from “regular humans.” This got me thinking. How is a dancer’s experience different from that of any other human? What about my experience specifically as a female dancer? The historical inequality of women made me consider what life as a dancer would have been like for different historical dance figures. I wanted to know what life was like for them as humans beyond their accomplishments in the dance world. The feminist component to this project was inevitable, as it is the lens through which I view the world. Thinking about my own journey was an effect of this curiosity. How has dance been both painful and relieving in my experience? Why did I start dancing? Why do I keep dancing? Then I had the idea of past and present colliding to reveal what a woman goes through and where women have been and where they have progressed to in the world of professional dance. The research was the most exciting part of this idea for me; the choreography on the other hand, presented as a daunting task that would undeniably push me out of my comfort zone.

## Research

Initially, my focus for this project surrounded how dancers were influenced by the changing expectations for, and perceptions of, women through the waves of feminism. The challenge here was maintaining an objective view of women in dance history without generalizing or depicting all women as either heroines or victims. Another challenge was the broad scope of dance and dance history. Dance is universal and plays many different roles in different cultures. Therefore, I needed to focus my research so that my dancers and I could appropriately relate to and represent, what I was most interested in- career dancers.

The rise of female career dancers in 1800s Europe followed their exclusion from dance, specifically ballet. However, men in power quickly realized they liked looking at women on stage and thus the sexualization of the female’s moving body began. Ballet could even be considered the first form of a “gentlemen’s club” (Banes 25) Wealthy men, who often invested a lot of money into the ballets, would come and watch women on stage as a type of foreplay. These men would then go backstage after the performances, and because the dancers on stage were largely working-class women, they were vulnerable, and often suffered from, sexual exploitation (Banes 25). This is not to say women weren’t being sexualized previous to the emergence of female ballet dancers, as we are all raised with a gendered-world view, a cycle of sexualization has been established and ingrained into our history and culture. This century is the only one that has attempted to do anything about preventing this pattern of gender-coding (LaPointe-Crump 170). This power dynamic, between the genders extended beyond the dance world, and was a problem in society in general during this time period. Inequality can only go on for so long before a cry for change is heard. Thus the rise of feminism.

The utopian feminist movement of the 1830s initiated shifts in society in terms of gender roles in the home and the workplace. The number of single women was also starting to rise (Banes 35). This was perceived as dangerous to society because there was a fear that prostitution would rise, and the population would decline. There was also a pervasive concept that spinsters were shameful because women get married to “properly channel their sexuality” (Banes 35). Ballet during this time was heavily controlled by the government in France and storylines would be used to manipulate audiences fears and values. Female characters in ballets almost always fell into one of the following five categories: damsel, seductress, caregiver, fairy/ethereal being, or virgin. One example of this is the ballet *Giselle*. The storyline, not so subtly evokes a fear of

dying a virgin through the characters of the ‘Wilis.’ The ‘Wilis’ appear in act II after the death of the titular character and consist of a corps of young women who died virgins and are therefore doomed to dance for eternity (Banes 30). The goal here seems to be to scare young women into marriage.

Just as much as the patrons and donors of ballets wanted to show women what not to be through tragedy, protagonists would often represent what an ideal woman should be, with many of these ideals drawn from fairytale characters. This was largely the case in the Russian Imperial Ballet. Audiences of ballets were still largely men who wanted to see a woman on stage that would excite them. The themes of ballet plot lines were often similar and centered around the marriage pursuit (Banes 1). Professional ballet was, at this point in time, considered merely a form of entertainment. Dance did not have the opportunity to emerge as a high art form until women began to take over.

Early modern dance emerged as a revolt against the constriction of ballet. The three women who most notably contributed to the emergence of this form are Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, and Ruth St. Denis. Now that choreography was being created by women, the themes of dance works became more diverse and indicative of the female experience. This also began to draw more female audiences. A female audience largely meant that audience members were there to watch the actual movement and dancing versus being there solely to lust after the dancers (Banes). The research of the reactive works of these early modern dance artists presented a dichotomy. The expectations for women were so nuanced that the rejection of these expectations resulted in women either becoming overtly sexual or rejecting sexuality all together. Loie Fuller was one of those that rejected every aspect of standardized femininity and the sexuality that came with it, but still her work was sexualized by the media and her admirers of her work despite her intention being the opposite (Banes). This finding influenced me greatly when considering how I wanted to incorporate sexuality into my piece. I questioned if dance could ever be perceived as gender-neutral or if the audience would always place a gender-coded lens over a work?

My research expanded well beyond this period of time; however it was only up to this point that I incorporated the research fully into the work.

## **Creation**

This work exists within the context of a larger production of other student works called *Ellipses* or the Fall Choreography projects. The other pieces are unrelated to my work, *Bodies to Creators*, although many of my dancers ended up performing in multiple pieces. I chose to present the work in this format for the main reason of simplicity; the dates and times were already scheduled, a stage manager was already assigned, and it offered me a larger pool of dancers to select from.

The bulk of my research was conducted between March and September of 2019, with the rehearsal process beginning at the end of September. Throughout these months of academic research, I filmed myself improvising based on my findings and my reactions to the research. Through this process I developed preliminary gestures that would prove to be significant to the piece. By understanding my physical reactions to what I was discovering through my research, I could better understand how an audience might best perceive these. At the time I wasn't sure how much of this would end up being a part of my set choreography, but it ended up being helpful to revisit these initial movement ideas for inspiration during the choreographic process. I

also used my research to help my dancers connect to the movement on a more personal and informed level.

My audition process for this piece was less focused on the technique of dancers or their ability to execute choreography. The audition took place before classes started alongside the other choreographers for *Ellipses*. Everyone was looking for different things technically and stylistically, so there were several different sections to the auditions including a modern phrase, a jazz phrase, and improvisation. I had an added component that I was looking for because I was looking for people before dancers. I began the audition by asking the entire pool of dancers to write me a response to one question- why do you dance? It was important to me that I cast dancers that could write about dance in a thoughtful way. I also knew that improvisation would be an integral part of my choreographic process, so I conducted the improvisation portion of the audition. I asked them to pick a natural element (earth, water, air, fire) that they felt was most indicative of how they view themselves as humans and how they like to move naturally and then improvise with this in mind. The purpose of this task was simply to give the dancers a place to start. Many of these dancers were freshmen, and therefore likely did not have a lot of improvisation experience yet, thus I was clear that the purpose of the exercise was to draw out their natural movement.

I began my first rehearsal by sharing with my dancers my journey thus far as a dancer, and then asked them to journal about their own. They had as much time as they wanted to write and were able, but not obligated, to share anything they wrote or discovered. All five dancers shared their experiences, and as a group we were able to relate to and support one another. This solidified for me that this piece would be unique to these dancers. The next rehearsal I asked them to review their journal entries and then improvise. I took note of each dancers movement tendencies. Following this initial movement rehearsal, I began to put together movement phrases with their qualities in mind. It was during this rehearsal that I set the beginning of this piece. I knew I wanted the dancers to enter from the audience to appear as though they were being pulled into the performance space by the music and their desire to dance. Beginning the piece this way also gave the dancers the opportunity to enter into the mindset that is called for by the piece.

The next rehearsal before teaching any set choreography, I sat the dancers down and gave them an overview of my research. It was important to me that my dancers saw the level and depth of research that lay behind the choreography, and that they cared enough about the journeys of the dancers of the past to relate it to their own. I presented the research in a similar way to how I presented my research in an academic setting. We had thoughtful conversations about all the topics, and I asked their opinions on the research and encouraged them to consider how the history is relevant to their own lives. They asked questions and I clarified as best they could. I was happy that I had this discussion early in the process because it solidified the intention of the piece for the dancers, improving the quality of their performance and increasing their investment in the piece.

Over the course of the rehearsals that followed, I began teaching several movement phrases. These phrases were then manipulated and at times used in their full length, with slight adaptations in terms of formation. The steps within these phrases appear individually throughout the piece as well and contribute to the overall movement vocabulary of the work. The rest of the movement vocabulary was drawn from the dancer's solos. Each of the dancers in this work had a solo which was indicative of her specific journey. The process for each of the solos involved first having the dancer journal and respond to questions regarding their personal history and experience with dance and what type of movement they found to be the most comfortable in their

bodies. I then had them immediately improvise so I could choreograph with their movement style and tendencies in mind. In several solos, improvisation was an integral component to the piece.

The first solo relates to when dancers experience conflict within their dance lives. The dancer must work through dance related conflict with dance. Her movement involves motifs of protection, self-encouragement, and waiting. Questions we posed together in developing the solo included: How do we protect ourselves within dance? How do we pick ourselves up in times of conflict? When do we push through and when do we hold back? This dancer has a tendency to make contact with her hands-on parts of her body, drawing her full focus to these points of contact, she also prefers a lower center of gravity and tends to move in more open than closed positions.

The second dancer's solo is a little more specific in context. This dancer is open about her struggle with clinical depression and has viewed dance often as a form of treatment. She also has a specific person she relates to the reason why she is still dancing at all. They met through dance, which begged the question, what does dance bring us? We worked together to formulate a movement concept of coming from darkness into light. Her preferred movement style was slow and rounded. This dancer was injured so the process was slightly different in that she watched as I was setting the piece and offered feedback on what she felt looked like what she wanted to do.

The third and fourth solos both show how dance can feel safe. The third solo shows how dance can be a creative outlet or an escape from the real world. We played with specifying the difference between freedom and escape. This dancer views her relationship with dance as a place of reflection and a way towards personal growth. The fourth solo has a slightly different approach to the same idea of safety in dance. It relies on dance as a comfort due to familiarity and associated positivity. These dancers' movements differed in that soloist three had a focus on tension in the shoulders and specific hand articulations. Soloist four expressed her desire not to feel the effort while dancing but also while watching dance. She preferred round and smooth movements. This comparison draws attention to how people's journey's influence their reactions and tendencies.

The final solo was completely improvised by the dancer. This dancer finds a freedom when she improvises that evades her at times when executing choreography. I could think of no better way to represent her essence. We discussed her history and her movement tendencies and then we began to set a score with each other. We established a home base in the center of the space and the outskirts of the space represented things her mind wants to visit. It could be a feeling, a memory, a person and whenever she felt like it, she could return to home base. This mirrored in her movement as she began taking more risks towards the outskirts and smoother, safer and slower when spaced in the center of the room.

The piece ends the way it starts, with improvisation. The purpose of this was to show that the journey is ongoing for all of these dancers. The future of their relationships with dance will ultimately be in their hands. It lies in their movement, curiosity, and passion. Improvisation was the most honest way to represent and honor their stories and their vulnerability. I leave the audience with these final words for reflection:

In a society that has normalized a binary division of gender by placing men constantly at the helm, it is a challenge to level the playing field. Modern dance, as the only art form dominated by women, will always have an obligation to contribute to this dialogue. Dancers of the past, present, and the future, regardless of gender, inevitably face the challenges that come with existing simultaneously as bodies, dancers, and creators.



## Design

Throughout my time as a student of Theatre and Dance at Ball State University, I have had the opportunity to be exposed to the elements of artistic creation that go beyond the choreography itself. Making design decisions for this piece was an unanticipated learning experience. Even with my general awareness of design elements I still lacked the knowledge of certain fields to formulate what I wanted from the Ellipses Design Team. The design elements that contributed most to the final product of this work were sound, lighting, and costumes.

The sound design elements of this work mainly involved editing music and voice recordings. I knew I wanted all of the music to be performed by female musicians, so I put together a playlist that I shared with my dancers that we used throughout the entire rehearsal process. The dancers were given the opportunity to choose their preferred solo song from this given playlist. This ensured that each solo was geared directly towards the artistic voice of the dancer. The final list of songs used in this work included the following in order: “Against the Wind” by Victory, “Sage” by Lucy Clare, “I Can See You Whisper” by Madeleine Cocolas, “Duende” by Zinovia Arvanitidi, “Elle” by Muriel Bostdorp, and “Nettle” by Lucy Clare. The first song, “Against the Wind” was the only song that was selected by me. This song has been somewhat an anthem to me in my life for the past year or so. I can remember the first time I listened to it and broke down crying. I was at a point in my life where I knew I could not go on the way I had been going. This song gave me courage to confront my fears and problems with grace, understanding, and the courage to overcome. My hope was that this would be felt by the dancers and the audience as well. The dancers go on a significant personal journey throughout the piece as so much of it is inspired by their challenges, pitfalls, and insecurities.

The other sound design elements of this piece were two voice recordings near the beginning and at the end of the work. This was how I decided to share with audience highlights of my research to give context to the movement and specify the overall purpose of the work. I think allowing the audience to hear the choreographer’s voice beyond just the physical movements and phrases is appreciated by audience members. I edited the music and voice recordings using Audacity. This software allowed me to cut songs, fade them out, and overlap tracks. I overlapped the voice recordings with the music at times so the dancers still had a beat to follow but also, so the audience was not overwhelmed by too many sounds happening at once. The final product was one long track.

The costumes concept for this piece was conceived through conversations with my dancers and my advisor. I knew I wanted one color to unify the dancers but all different types of garments. I wanted the garments to be pedestrian and athletic. The dancers still needed to move freely. Eventually, the color green was selected to symbolize growth and rebirth as they are present in the piece. The dancers brought in what they had matching these criteria from home and I made final decisions regarding what combinations of clothing worked best to create the desired level of cohesion in the overall group. I also made the choice of having the dancers dance barefoot. It gave the piece a more rooted feeling and I often associate being barefoot with a childhood memory of playing outside barefoot. These added elements to the movement itself allow the dancers and the audience to feel fully immersed in the story and the feelings.

Feelings are what drove a lot of my decision making throughout his entire process of creating and it became incredibly critical when it came to lighting design. I know nothing about communicating with lighting designers using technical terms. The lighting designer for this show was great about working collaboratively with me to create a lighting score that would give a

certain section the desired tone. I was able to use words and phrases such as, “a feeling of being lost and confused,” “feeling of being trapped,” and “happiness, safety, and familiarity” to give her direction while setting the cues. The outcome of this collaboration was beautiful, and it inspired me to take the initiative to educate myself on lighting to hopefully form more concrete and specific opinions and choices for future works.

## **Reflection**

Early on I knew that because of the sheer amount of research and information that inspired this work, I wanted to clue the audience in. My initial idea was to have portions of lecture integrated throughout the work to distinguish how the dance was representing the passage of time through history. Speaking during the live performance proved to be problematic as I am a soft-spoken person and the acoustics of the space were not conducive to live spoken word. Instead I opted to record my voice to play over, and in the silences, of my sound score. This proved to be effective and I received positive feedback on the execution. Inserting my own voice into the piece not only allowed audience members to have context, but also created a relationship between me, the dancers, and the audience. I would include this component of the work, to some extent, in any future adaptations.

Choreographically, the most successful components of the work were the solos. Along with this being the most stress free and enjoyable part of my choreographic process, I was also able to put the solos together faster than any other part of the choreography. I worked very hard to capture the essence of each of the dancers so that they would feel confident and connected to their movement. The one on one collaboration allowed me to feel more relaxed in the space than I often feel when I have to negotiate how to work with many bodies in the space at once. I was glad to learn that I have this preference towards solo choreography as I can now keep it in mind for future choreographic endeavors. I hope to attempt using this strength to help me with my weaker ability to choreograph groups. Maybe by thinking about solos going on in different sections of the space when it is actually a group, I can free myself up and be more creative.

As with any project, I faced many challenges throughout the process. Not long into the rehearsal process, I experienced an injury that greatly limited my mobility. My choreographic technique had been completely dependent upon my own movement experimentation. For about a week I felt completely stuck with the work, then I remembered that I had videos of movement research I had done over the summer in the thick of my historical research. I was able to pull movement from these videos to teach my dancers that was consistent with the intentions of the work. This setback did, however, lead to a time-crunch near the end of the rehearsal process. Therefore, the transitions between the dancers’ solos near the end of the piece are places that I would like to further develop in the future.

Another challenge I faced during this project was more of an internal struggle. I felt like a fraud. My fear was that my personal life was a complete contradiction to the strong feminist principles that drove the work. While I might believe and care about all the concepts of feminism, I am not the embodiment of these concepts. There is still a part of me that buys into all of what society tells me men want a woman to be, and there is a part of me that wants to be that woman. I want to be wanted, beautiful, and protected. While these are all completely human desires, as a woman, I felt like I was giving in, like I was weak, because society so often tells women that they are incapable of being anything but beautiful, that they are in need of protection, and if they are undesired by a man, they are worthless. Quickly I realized, however,

that of course I am not the embodiment of all the feminist principles, no one is. The important thing is that I recognize the issues and I am eager to confront them and contribute to the conversation. I am not the perfect feminist, dancer, choreographer, or woman, but I don't have to be perfect. This project does not have to be perfect; it does not have to change lives or revolutionize dance history. It just has to be honest.

I have never considered myself a choreographer and my lack of confidence loomed over me up until the first showing for my peers. Like many dancers, I have the unreachable desire for perfection constantly hanging over my head. The topics of this project and the people, my dancers, that have become such a significant part of this project heightened my insecurity in my choreography. Through the process, however, I have learned to take the pressure off the project and let it become what it needs to be. I have learned that every creative process involves crisis. Each choice an artist makes is a form of a crisis. Somehow knowing this made it easier to move through these "mini crises" of decision making and I have gained a confidence in my ability to create meaningful work that I can possibly turn into a career.

I discovered that the way I like to work as a dancer is very different than the way I like to work as a choreographer. While in both roles, I like there to be a strong relationship and connection between the dancers and choreographers, as a dancer I do not always enjoy when the choreographer derives work from improvisation. I have found that I prefer to be told exactly what to do and get stressed when asked for input. However, as a choreographer, I value the input of my dancers greatly and consider collaboration a crucial part of my process. I hope that this realization will make me more open in the future as a dancer when working with choreographers who work the same way I do as a choreographer.

Any work rooted in history contributes to the larger dance community in bringing the history to the attention of those who may have never considered dance to even have a real history. This project brings an awareness to the dangerous perceptions of women in dance that have existed throughout history, and to then make people reconsider the way they view female bodies in space. Through the course of this project I endeavored to show the true strength and power that comes with being not only a dancer but being a woman, and therefore correct any misconceptions audience members might be carrying with them. This is also an opportunity for dancers to have a platform for understanding and sharing their personal experiences. From conversations I had with my dancers, I believe I accomplished this through not only the final product but also the entire process.

## **Future Developments**

I will never be able to recreate this exact piece on a different group of dancers and I am glad for that. If I do rework this piece in the future it will have to embody the personal experiences of the dancers that are performing. This also allows for nearly endless possibilities for this project to expand and evolve. I currently am excited about two concepts that could both be developments from the original work. I was asked several times throughout my process if I ever considered choreographing and performing this work myself as a solo. This is something I plan to explore in the spring semester, and eventually, post-graduation. I appreciated being able to put some distance between me and the work by choreographing on bodies other than my own. I wanted to ensure my ability to remain objective, especially for the sake of this project. However, now I feel I am ready to make it more personal and let go of objectivity to move myself out of my comfort zone and really embody the research and my reactions to it. This

experience has also motivated me to seek out professional dance companies that frequently produces research-based work.

Another possibility for this project would be to produce it on a much larger and more inclusive scale. As our society begins to shift the way gender is perceived, there are many underrepresented groups in the world of dance. By collaborating with artists coming from a wide variety of identities, I would like to incorporate and have representation from all genders and races. I developed this concept as a response to a question I frequently was asked throughout my process: how are those that do not identify as female going to connect to this work? I only felt comfortable telling the perspective of dancers I could best relate to and therefore appropriately represent. Collaborating with other artists would allow more perspectives to come together to form a more comprehensive study on dance and gender.

I predict that due to my passion for this project, I will continue exploring and researching these topics for the rest of my career. I couldn't get enough of the research, in fact I am still reading and learning about women making even more connections. I can't remember the last time I was this excited about history, but when you can relate to the figures you are reading about. This research has not only allowed me to learn about history it has also allowed me to more conclusively analyze my own experiences as a dancer. This self-discovery is now a part of my everyday life.

**Research Presentation Part 1**

<https://youtu.be/vjTqJ1Z8xvU>

**Research Presentation Part 2**

<https://youtu.be/3DcRHm86owk>

**November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Performance**

<https://youtu.be/QLfFfOwdwbI>

## Archive Photos



Fig. 1- Against the Wind House Light Group



Fig. 2- Against the Wind Light Cue 1 Group



Fig. 3- Against the Wind End Group



Fig. 4- Speaking Group



Fig. 5- Lobby Shot



Fig. 6- I Can See You Whisper Group





Fig. 7- Kailyn Solo



Fig. 8- Duende End Group



Fig. 9- Liza Solo



Fig. 10- Liza Solo



Fig. 11- Tori Solo

All Archive Photos Courtesy of Kip Shawger.



## Printed Materials

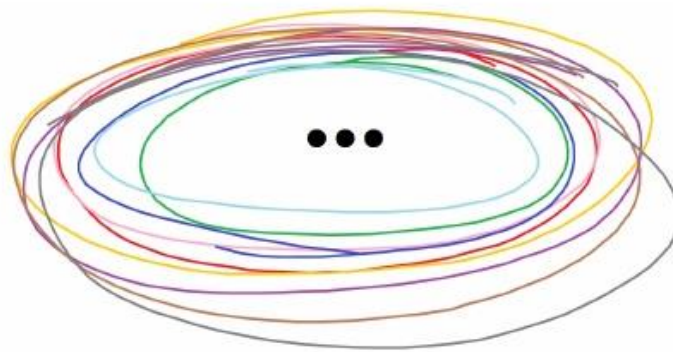
FEATURING CHOREOGRAPHY BY BALL STATE DANCE MAJORS

KOORSGARD DANCE STUDIO

BALL GYMNASIUM 213

NOVEMBER 14-16 7:30 PM

PRESHOW BEGINS ON SIDEWALK AT 7 PM



# ellipses

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College of Fine Arts  
Department of Theatre and Dance

Fig. 12- Ellipses Poster

## Choreographers' Note

An ellipse is an oval shape defined by a point that exists in relation to two other points: so that the sum of the distances between the designated point and the two other points is constant. An ellipse is a series of three dots that implies the same meaning of a piece of text while intentionally allowing for fewer words than originally written. In the middle of a sentence it creates brevity, but when placed at the end, it implies there is still more to be said. Both words share a plural form - ellipses. We are intrigued by this plurality. We are inspired by the continuity of the ellipse and the possibility within the ellipsis. What can be discovered when both forms of ellipses, and what each represents, exist in the same space?

-Audrey Fosson\* & Carly Lucas\*

## Production Staff

Student Choreographers:

Hannah Bertrand, Audrey Fosson\*,  
Kailyn Kelley\*, Greta Linder\*,  
Carly Lucas\*, Kali Marquart\*,  
Hannah Morrow\*, Caroline Tribi,  
Keely Wissel\*

Lighting Designer:

Katrina Conte\*

Assistant Production Stage Manager:

Kelly DeLisle

Stage Managers:

Alexis Cuda\*, Chloe Kincade\*,  
Amelia Ringer\*

Crew:

Storm Armstrong, Tucker Knoop,  
Jordan Shipp

Choreography Projects Advisor:

Christie Zimmerman

\*Denotes Departmental Scholarship Student

## Faculty and Staff Advisors & Mentors

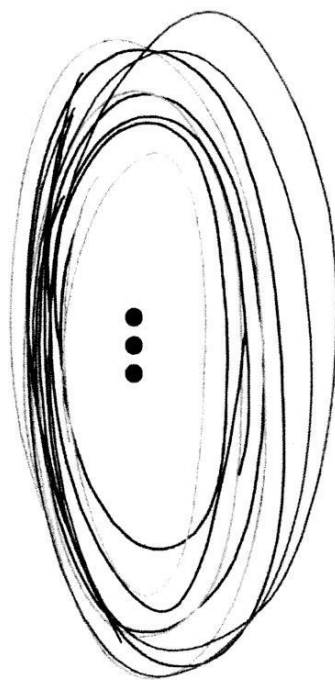
Choreography: Mya Ajanku, Susan Koper, Jenn Meckley,

Audra Sokol, Melanie Swihart, Michael Worcel

Lighting: Mickie Marie

Stage Management: Colleen Tovar

Ball State University, College of Fine Arts, and the  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
Present



# ellipses

2019 Fall Choreography Projects



Korsgaard Dance Studio  
Ball Gym Room 213  
November 14-16 at 7:30 pm

Fig. 13- Ellipse Program Page 1 and 2

## Sidewalk Culture

Performed in front of Ball Gym pre-show.  
A commentary on pedestrian engagement concerning the sidewalk culture here at Ball State.

Choreographed by Kali Marquart\*  
Performed by Victoria Bulick\*, Lauren Burns\*, Kaitlyn Day, Liza Heeler, Kyla Humphress\*, Hannah Kohl, Minnie Rogers, Mat Webb\*

## Bodies to Creators

A research-based work investigating the female dancer's reaction to her own journey, as well as the journeys of the women over the course of dance history.

Choreographed by Keely Wissel\*  
Performed by Victoria Bulick\*, Kaitlyn Day, Liza Heeler, Kyla Humphress\*, Kaitlyn Kelley\*

Music: "Against the Wind" by Victory; "Sage" by Lucy Claire, Ren Ford, and Marie Schreier; "I Can See You Whisper" by Madeline Cocolas; "Duende" by Zinovia Arvanitidi; "Elle" by Muriel Bostdorp; "Nettle" by Lucy Claire

## Strength of One, Strength of Many

An immersion of modern dance and bodybuilding.  
How have you found strength?

Choreographed by Greta Linder\*  
Performed by Lauren Burns\*, Natia Dorman\*, Sam Fee, Caroline Wilson  
Music: "Supertrack" by Extrawelt; "Crow" by Forest Swords

## Small Pensive Woman

This piece is influenced by Wilhelm Lehmbruck's sculpture titled "Small Pensive Woman" on display at the David Owsley Museum of Art.  
Choreographed and Performed by Audrey Fosson\*  
Music: "Deep Noise" by Peaceful Me

## This We'll Defend

Red, white, and blue: the three phases of United States Army basic training.  
Choreographed by Hannah Morrow\*  
Performed by Liza Heeler, Caroline Wilson  
Music: "Up, At The Moon" by Michael Wall

## Make Visible

An exploration of prayer as movement and shame as a boundary.  
How do our physical bodies make visible the invisible realities of our lives?  
Choreographed by Hannah Bertrand  
Performed by Hannah Bertrand, Natia Dorman\*, Kaitlyn Kelley\*  
Music: "Agnus Dei" by Rufus Wainwright

## Handprints

"Every history is a story of the ways in which the individual violates the specificity of the species. The individual is a monster, but not all monsters are individuals." - Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreographing History*  
Choreographed and Performed by Carly Lucas\*  
Music: "Sudden Throw" by Ólafur Arnalds; "thank you" by Eluvium

## Women v. Construct (2019)

This piece is about how women are perceived and treated within their experience as humans. It follows the five themes of constriction, promiscuity, vulnerability, support, and empowerment.  
Choreographed by Caroline M. Tribi  
Performed by Victoria Bulick\*, Kaitlyn Day, Kyla Humphress\*, Hannah Kohl, Lauren Smith  
Music: "Singing Bridge," "And Keep Smiling," "4 or 5 Trees" by Rachael's

## Eighty

A celebration of the pop culture of the 1980s.  
Choreographed by Kaitlyn Kelley\*  
Performed by Lauren Burns\*, Natia Dorman\*, David Hurt\*, Austin Marchino, Mat Webb\*  
Music: "One Night in Bangkok" by Murray Head; "Africa" by Toto; "Sunglasses at Night" by Corey Hart; "Shadows of the Night" by Pat Benatar; "It's Raining Men" by The Weather Girls; "Every Little Thing She Does is Magic" by The Police  
Music remixed by Catty Stegmaler

\*Denotes Departmental Scholarship Student

Talk Back Following Performance on November 14<sup>th</sup>

Fig. 14- Ellipses Program Page 3 and 4

### **Works Consulted**

Banes, Sally. *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage*. Routledge, London and New York, 2006.

Foulkes, Julia L. *modern bodies*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 2002.

Hay, Deborah. *my body, the buddhist*. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 2000.

Jowitt, Deborah. "In Pursuit of the Sylph: Ballet in the Romantic Period." in Carter, Alexandra (ed) *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, Routledge, London and New York, 1998, pp 203-213.

LaPointe-Crump, Janice. "Of Dainty Gorillas and Macho Sylphs: Dance and Gender." *The Dance Experience*, Nadel, Myron Howard and Strauss, Marc Raymond (ed) Princeton Book Company, 2003, pp. 159-172.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. 1792.